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Testimony Supporting with amendments SB616- Senate Finance Committee  
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**Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of District 43 and Maryland Ratepayer, I am writing to express my strong support of SB616, which will make sure that our subsidies for renewable energy through the Renewable Portfolio Standard are going toward actual renewable energy. We are in a climate crisis, and we cannot afford to be spending our renewable energy money on facilities that emit greenhouse gasses - now is the time to double down Maryland's commitment to truly renewable energy and subsidize only facilities that are emissions-free, i.e. wind and solar.

Trash incineration should never have been included in Tier 1 of the RPS. Trash incinerators pollute more than coal per unit of energy produced, and emit significant quantities of greenhouse gasses and local harmful air pollution: much of their energy comes from burning plastic, a fossil fuel. In the original design of the RPS program, incinerators were included in the Tier 2 category that was to phase out in 2019, but in 2011 as community pressure was mounting against two new proposed incinerators in Baltimore and Frederick, the industry got itself added to Tier 1. Ultimately, the community opposition won, and neither facility was built, but \$36 million in RPS subsidies still goes to incineration each year.

Other types of burning waste or manufacturing methane must come out of the RPS for the same exact reasons as trash incineration. They all emit greenhouse gasses, pollute and harm the health of their neighboring communities, are disproportionately located in communities already overburdened by pollution, and prop up industrial systems that we must transition away from in order to face climate change. In particular, manufacturing methane and feeding it into our pipeline system is currently being used to justify continuing and expanding pipelines. If nothing changes, PEER estimates that MD will have spent half a billion dollars by 2030 subsidizing polluters through the RPS, money that could have gone toward truly renewable energy.

The legislature should not leave communities facing acute fights against new polluters behind. New factory farm waste digesters have been proposed across the Eastern Shore, and communities are engaged in local-level fights against new facilities now - just like Baltimore City, Frederick County, and Carroll County were 10-15 years ago. These facilities must be taken out of the RPS to support the local fights against harmful pollution going on right now.

Thank you for listening.

Stephanie Compton